

Message Text

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67

ACTION SS-30

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R 080135Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2730

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CANBERRA 1391

EXDIS

DEPT PASS CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AS, US

SUBJ: DISCUSSION OF DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS

BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED STATES

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR, DEP ASST SECRETARY SNEIDER AND EMBOFFS MET WITH TOP AUSTRALIAN FONOFF OFFICIALS MARCH 6 FOR 2 1/2 HOUR DISCUSSION OF PROMBLEMS IN US-AUSTRALIAN FOREING RELATIONS. INDOCHINA EMERGED CLEARLY AS AREA WHERE WE HAVE MOST DUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES, WITH LESSER DIFFERENCE RELATING TO AUSTRALIA'S IMPENDING RECOGNITION OF NORTH KOREA, POSSIBLE DIFFERENCES OVER INDIAN OCEAN (DIEGO GARCIA) AND DIFFERENCES OVER LAW OF SEA WHICH WE DID NOT HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS. DISCUSSIONS WERE PROBING, PRODUCTIVE AND DEFINITELY WORTH PURSUING. SECRETARY OF DFA, ALAN RENOUF, SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED AMBASSADOR TO SAY THIS WAS BEST DISCUSSION OF THIS TYPE WHICH DFA HAD EVER HAD AND TO SUGGEST HAVING REGULAR BIENNIAL MEETINGS EITHER HERE OR IN WASHINGTON. END SUMMARY.
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2. FOLLOWING UP ON A SUGGESTION RAISED AT THE END OF A MEETING ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL HAD IN CANBERRA FEBRUARY 20 WITH A GROUP OF SENIOR AUSTRALIAN DEPT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICERS, A SIMILAR DISCUSSION WAS HELD

AT DFA ON MARCH 6, ATTENDED ON THE AMERICAN SIDE BY AMBASSADOR GREEN, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SNEIDER, ANP COUNTRY DIRECTOR MOSER, AND THREE EMBASSY OFFICERS AND ON AUSTRALIAN SIDE BY VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE SENIOR AUSTRALIAN DFA OFFICIALS. THE DISCUSSION WAS UNSTRUCTURED BUT DIRECTED TOWARDS IDENTIFYING AND EXAMINING DIFFERING PERCEPTIONS BY AUSTRALIA AND THE U.S. ON EAST ASIAN ISSUES.

3. PRINCIPAL DIFFERENCES CONCERNED KOREA (AND PARTICULARLY THE SPEED OF AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH THE DPRK). PROSPECTS IN SOUTH VIET-NAM, THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA, AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, THE STRATEGIC SITUATION IN THE INDIAN OCEAN.

4. ON KOREA, WE RECOGNIZED THAT THE AUSTRALIAN DECISION TO NORMALIZE WITH THE DPRK WAS IRREVOCABLE, BUT WE OUTLINED OUR CONCERN THAT RECOGNITION OF THE DPRK, WITHOUT RECOGNITION OF THE ROK BY KEY COMMUNIST STATES COULD LEAD BOTH TO OVERCONFIDENCE BY THE DPRK AND COULD CREATE PANIC IN THE ROK, WITH SERIOUS, DESTABILIZING EFFECTS. THE AUSTRALIANS CLEARLY HAD DIFFICULTY BELIEVING THAT OPENING AN AUSTRALIAN MISSION IN PYONGYANG COULD HAVE SUCH SERIOUS EFFECTS. THE DFA OFFICERS TOLD US THAT IN CONTACTING THE DPRK IN JAKARTA FEB 25 THE AUSTRALIANS HAD MADE CLEAR THEY WERE NOT RPT NOT ABANDONING THE ROK AND DID NOT RPT NOT SUPPORT POLICIES OF NORTH KOREA. AUSTRALIANS ALSO STATED THEY TOLD DPRK REPS THAT NORTH KOREAN NEGOTIATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA ON RECOGNITION WOULD BE TAKEN AS IMPLYING THAT NORTH KOREA ACCEPTED THAT THERE WAS A LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT IN SOUTH KOREA. AUSTRALIANS CONCLUDED THAT GOA POLICY TOWARDS NORTH KOREA COULD BE COMPATIBLE WITH U.S. POLICY. AUSTRALIANS STATED THAT, AS OF MAR 6, THEY HAD HAD NO REACTION WHATEVER FROM NORTH KOREANS (POSSIBLY BECAUSE THEY HAD EXPRESSED SO FIRMLY

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THEIR INTENTION TO CONTINUE RELATION WITH ROK AND THEIR RESERVES ABOUT DPRK POLICIES).

5. ON SOUTH VIETNAM, WE SAID WE DID NOT BELIEVE THERE WOULD BE A MAJOR OFFENSIVE BY NORTH VIET-NAM AGAINST SOUTH AND THAT WE THINK PRESIDENT THIEU IS HOLDING HIS OWN. WE NOTED U.S. EMBASSY IN SAIGON BELIEVES NORTH VIET-NAM IS, ON THE WHOLE, DISAPPOINTED WITH RESULTS OF THE PAST YEAR, SINCE SIGNATURE OF PARIS AGREEMENTS. AUSTRALIANS NOTED THEY ARE PROVIDING SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC AID TO SVN, SECOND ONLY TO W5 59 8, \$9,3 8- -, \$8, \$8-. AUSTRALIANS SAID THEY COULD SEE U.S. IS SERVING ITS SHORT-TERM INTERESTS IN SUPPORTING GVN AND GKR BUT ASKED IF U.S. CONSIDERS IT VITAL TO KEEP INDOCHINA

IN WESTERN CAMP ONCE AN ACCEPTABLE OUTCOME IN SVN IN
ACHIEVED. AMBASSADOR GREEN REPLIED THAT U.S. INTEREST
IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA IS NOT OF SAME NATURE AS
INTEREST IN NORTHEAST ASIA, MIDDLE EAST, OR LATIN
AMERICA. HOWEVER, U.S. CREATED VERY LARGE INTEREST
IN SOUTHEAST ASIA BY EFFORT WE HAVE MADE THERE. THERE
WOULD BE TREMENDOUS DISTRESS IN U.S. IF WE BACKED OUT
NOW. AMBASSADOR ASKED WHAT IMPRESSION WOULD BE CREATED
BY BACKING OUT OF SOUTH VIET-NAM ON OTHER COUNTRIES OF
WORLDS. AUSTRALIANS IMPLIED THEIR BELIEF THAT NOT ONLY
SVN BUT PROBABLY ALSO USG WERE VIOLATING PARIS
AGREEMENTS ALONG WITH NVN. THIS WAS REFUTED.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED ABOVE ADDEE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CANBERRA 1391

EXDIS

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6. ON CAMBODIA, DIFFERENCES WERE PERHAPS MOST NOTABLE.
AMBASSADOR GREEN SAID HE BELIEVED AUSTRALIANS MAY HAVE
MISUNDERSTOOD WHAT HAPPENED IN CAMBODIA IN 1970. U.S.
NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERTHROW OF SIHANOUK, WHO HAD,
DESPITE HIS DISAGREEABLE QUALITIES, PERFORMED USEFUL
FUNCTION. SIHANOUK, IN LAST ANALYSIS,
WAS OVERTHROWN BY HIS OWN PEOPLE. GKR,
DESPITE ITS DEFECTS, HAD SHOWN CERTAIN STAYING QUALITY
AND HAD DONE BETTER THAN EXPECTED. U.S. DOES NOT
THINK GKR IS ABOUT TO FAIL. IN LONGER TERM, U.S.
WANTS TO SEE NEGOTIATING PROCESS BEGIN. IF WE
SIMPLY WASH OUR HANDS OF CAMBODIA, THERE WILL BE NO
NEGOTIATIONS. AUSTRALIANS REPLIED THAT, IN THEIR

VIEW, U.S. POLICIES IN BOTH SOUTH VIET-NAM AND CAMBODIA WILL NOT PRODUCE SOLUTIONS U.S. SEEKS, WHILE FIGHTING CONTINUEES. PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM IS LESS OPPOSED TO NORTH VIETNAMESE SUPPORT FOR THE KHMER ROUGES THAN U.S. SUPPORT FOR LON NOL GOVERNMENT BECAUSE OF HIS RESERVATIONS ABOUT LON NOL GOVERNMENT WHICH, HE FEELS, CAME TO POWER IN ILLEGITIMATE WAY. CONFIDENTIAL

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LATER, AUSTRALIANS SAID WHITLAM DOES NOT CONSIDER U.S. WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERTHROW OF SIHANOUK.

7. ON INDIAN OCEAN AUSTRALIANS DID MOST OF TALKING, NOTING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COMMITTEE TO STUDY INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE PROPOSAL. AUSTRALIANS EXPRESSED THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT IN WHAT THEY CONSIDERED TARDY AND INADEQUATE PRESENTATION BY U.S. OF RATIONALE FOR DIEGO GARCIA EXTENSIONS, NOTING THAT AUSTRALIA INFORMED AT SAME TIME AND IN SAME DETAIL AS, FOR EXAMPLE, BURMA. WE REVIEWED OUR PROBLEMS IN MORE EXPEDITIOUS CONSULTATIONS ON DIEGO GARCIA, NOTING TIME LOST THROUGH CONSULTATIONS WITH BRITISH, WHO OWN THE ISLAND, AND NEED TO CONSULT WITH U.S. CONGRESS, SINCE APPROPRIATIONS INVOLVED. AUSTRALIANS SAID THEY HAD BEEN INFORMED BY SENIOR U.S. DEPT OF DEFENSE OFFICIAL THAT, ALTHOUGH US\$29 MILLION REQUESTED FOR DIEGO GARCIA, REAL TARGET WAS US\$70-80 MILLION. WE REPLIED WE KNEW ONLY OF US\$29 MILLION FIGURE BUT CONCEDED THAT THERE MAY BE SOME PEOPLE IN PENTAGON WHO MAY WANT TO GO FURTHER.

8. COMMENT: BELIEVE DISCUSSION WAS OF VALUE IN SETTING STAGE FOR SIMILAR EXCHANGES ON OTHER PROBLEMS OF MUTUAL INTEREST. MEANWHILE, WE HAVE CLEARER VIEW OF AUSTRALIAN CONCERNS AND WE'LL BE WORKING ON THEM AS OPPORTUNITY PRESENTS ITSELF. SENIOR AUSTRALIAN OFFICIALS ATTACH HIGHEST IMPORTANCE TO AGREEMENTS REACHED WITH BARNARD REGARDING ADVANCE CONSULTATIONS IN STRATEGIC AND DEFENSE MATTERS. BELIEVE WE MUST TAKE SPECIAL PAINS TO SATISFY THEM ON THIS; DIEGO GARCIA CASE WAS A BAD START. DETAILED MEMCON BEING POUCHED TO EA FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SNEIDER. END COMMENT GREEN

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